

# The Medical Waste Reporter



Announcements for Wisconsin's Medical Waste Generators

Reporting year 2002

Issued January 2003

## Congratulations, 2002 H2E Award Winners!

Thirteen Wisconsin medical facilities earned Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E)\* awards in 2002. They are:

- Calumet Medical Center, Chilton (P)
- Cedar Community, West Bend (P)
- Columbia – St. Mary's Hospital, Milwaukee (P, PC)
- Holy Family Memorial Med. Center, Manitowoc (P)
- Mercy Health System, Janesville (P, PC, M)
- Mercy Medical Center, Oshkosh (P)
- Meriter Health Services, Madison (P, M)
- Riverview Hospital Assoc., WI Rapids (P, PC)
- Sacred Heart Hospital, Eau Claire (P, PC)
- St. Clare Hospital & Health Services, Baraboo (P)
- St. Elizabeth Hospital, Menasha (P)
- St. Mary's Hospital, Superior (P)
- St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center, Madison (P)

All of the above received the Partner Recognition Award (P) for setting goals to reduce waste. Winners of the Partners for Change Award (PC) made substantial progress towards their goals. Those who virtually eliminated mercury received the Mercury-Free Medicine Award (M).

\* H2E is a collaborative effort of the Am. Hospital Assoc., the US Environmental Protection Agency, Health Care Without Harm, the Am. Nurses Assoc. and many others.

**Applications  
for the 2003  
H2E awards  
are due  
January 31,  
2003**

Apply NOW! Any hospital, clinic or nursing home with a medical waste reduction plan easily qualifies for one or more of the H2E awards. Award application forms are available at [www.h2e-online.org](http://www.h2e-online.org).

## How to Recover Medical Supplies and Reduce Waste

Want to send unused medical supplies and usable equipment to charity, but don't know how to begin? Here's the REMEDY: Recovered Medical Equipment for the Developing World. REMEDY is an internationally-recognized, not-for-profit organization dedicated to teaching medical facilities how to recover medical supplies and keep useable materials out of landfills.

According to the REMEDY website, Wisconsin medical facilities already using the program include: Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, Milwaukee; Froedert Memorial Hospital, Milwaukee; Southeast Surgical, S.C., Milwaukee; St. Mary's Hospital, Brooklyn; Theda Clark Medical Center, Appleton; and United Health Group, Appleton.

**REMEDY  
can link your  
surplus to  
others' needs**

Besides teaching how to collect materials, REMEDY also provides free in-service training materials, consulting and networking to locate local and international donation recipients.

The REMEDY program teaches established, proven protocols; has set a standard for supply recovery; is efficient and legal; is inexpensive to maintain; and can be easily adopted or adapted.

For more information, visit [www.remedyinc.org](http://www.remedyinc.org) or call 203-737-5356. Another place to locate recipients is the "Product Donation Website" at [www.worldvisiongik.org](http://www.worldvisiongik.org).

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## Mercury →Reduction← News

### Central WI to Host Medical & Dental Mercury Workshop

The Central WI Mercury Reduction Program will hold a "Medical and Dental Mercury Workshop" in Stevens Point on Tuesday, March 4, 2003, at the Holiday Inn Expo and Convention Center.

The workshop will feature separate medical and dental breakout sessions with practical information and case studies. Catherine Zimmer (Minnesota Technical Assistance Program) will describe H2E tools for eliminating mercury in medical facilities. Mark Stone (Naval Dental Research Institute in Chicago) will discuss amalgam issues and the use of traps and separators. The workshop will also include a spill management demonstration and updates on DNR mercury regulations.

The Central WI Program is a joint effort between Intra-State Recycling Corp. (ISRC) and the Marathon, Portage and Wood County Health Departments. Workshop co-sponsors include ISRC, the Wisconsin Dental Association and major hospitals and clinics in the area.

**For workshop registration information**, contact Kathy Powell, ISRC, at 715-345-5972 or [powellk@co.portage.wi.us](mailto:powellk@co.portage.wi.us).

#### HOW TO CONTACT DNR STAFF:

##### **Medical waste questions:**

Barb Derflinger, Medical Waste Coordinator  
Phone: (608) 267-3548 Fax: (608) 267-2768  
Email: [medical.waste@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:medical.waste@dnr.state.wi.us)  
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Madison, WI 53707-7921

##### **Mercury questions:**

Randy Case, Mercury Reduction Coordinator  
Phone: (608) 267-7639 Fax: (608) 267-0496  
Email: [charles.case@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:charles.case@dnr.state.wi.us)  
Address: DNR CO/8, PO Box 7921  
Madison, WI 53707-7921

**DNR Web site:** [www.dnr.state.wi.us](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us)

### Mercury Reduction Rule Impacts Medical Facilities

State regulations limit the discharge of mercury into wastewater. New rules require municipalities to implement "mercury pollutant minimization programs." Section NR 106.145, Wis. Adm. Code, directs municipalities to work with medical facilities and others to reduce mercury discharges. To find out more about NR 106, visit

[www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/ww/mercury/mercury.htm](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/ww/mercury/mercury.htm) and click on "Draft Rule Package". Note: The rule was final in November 2002.

### Free Hg Recycling for Medical Facilities - Last Chance!

Free or reduced-cost recycling for mercury-containing products from medical facilities is available through September 30, 2003. Most of the two dozen Wisconsin municipalities with mercury reduction programs are offering the service, although a few have exhausted funding. To find out if you can use this program, visit [www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/cea/mercury/index.htm](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/cea/mercury/index.htm), click on "Contacts" and call the contact nearest you.

### OLD Lab Slides: Infectious or Not?

DNR and DHFS have determined that old laboratory slides are NOT infectious waste. However, they may be *hazardous* waste if the reagent used to create the slides had mercury in it and the slides contain over 0.2 mg/L mercury.

To find out if the reagent had mercury in it, check the MASCO database of 5000 reagents at [www1.netcasters.com/mercury/](http://www1.netcasters.com/mercury/) or ask the manufacturer to disclose all ingredients present. (This should be standard protocol for any chemical brought into your facility. It ultimately saves a lot of work at disposal time.)

If you determine the slides are not hazardous waste, they are just solid waste. Tape the packages securely so the slides don't slip out.

## H2E Helps JCAHO Compliance

Achieving the goals of H2E can help you meet or exceed Joint Commission (JCAHO) standards, as well as OSHA, EPA, DOT and other regulations.

The H2E goals are:

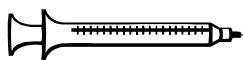
1. To virtually eliminate mercury-containing waste from medical facilities' waste by 2005.
2. To reduce the overall volume of waste (both regulated and non-regulated) 33% by 2005 and 50% by 2010.
3. To identify hazardous substances for pollution prevention and waste reduction opportunities, including hazardous chemicals and persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic pollutants.

These H2E goals support JCAHO goals for Environment of Care (EC), Patient Safety and Quality of Care. H2E goals also improve the environment and public health and can be used as JCAHO Performance Improvement initiatives.

For example, eliminating mercury-containing waste meets the following JCAHO standards:

- EC 1.1 The organization plans for a safe environment.
- EC 1.1.1 The organization plans for worker safety.
- EC.1.3 The organization plans for managing hazardous materials and waste.
- EC.4 The organization evaluates and improves conditions in the environment.

For more information, contact Catherine Zimmer, Healthcare Specialist, Minnesota Technical Assistance Program, 612-624-4635 or [zimme053@umn.edu](mailto:zimme053@umn.edu), or check the H2E website.



## Sharps Collection Updates

**National interest regarding sharps is rising.** A Coalition for Safe Community Needle Disposal has formed to help US communities develop programs for disposing of sharps. The Coalition recently issued a "Call to Action" to raise awareness about sharps in waste and launched a web site (see p. 4).

**JAPhA addresses syringe availability and disposal.** A supplement to the Nov/Dec 2002 Journal of the American Pharmaceutical Association, sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control, includes articles about Wisconsin and Brown County. See p. 4 for how to access the journal.

## Wisconsin is a leader in sharps collection.

Wisconsin is one of only 6 states actively dealing with sharps outside of professional health care. It has the most collection sites, over 500 registered sharps collection stations plus an unknown number of medical facilities that collect sharps without being required to register\*.

**DNR surveys sharps collectors.** Just how many sharps does Wisconsin collect annually? How much does it really cost? Since collectors are not required to report anything, DNR is surveying all registered\* sharps collection stations to find out. We will post the survey results on the DNR web site sometime in 2003.

*\* If your medical facility collects sharps but is not registered, we are very interested in hearing about your experiences in collecting sharps, too. Please call 608-266-2111 today and ask for a copy of the survey.*

**Many Wisconsin residents still don't dispose of their sharps properly.** Please do what you can to promote sharps collection, especially to serve people confined to their homes, injecting pets and livestock, using illicit drugs or who are not fluent in English.

## Try Native Landscaping



Is your medical facility surrounded by a lush green lawn? To prevent pollution, consider planting native species over some or all of it.

Native landscapes benefit all of us because they:

- ❖ Cost *significantly* less to maintain than turf
- ❖ Require no chemical pesticides or fertilizers and much less water and maintenance
- ❖ Offer healing through color, texture and fragrance
- ❖ Cut air pollution from exhaust and fuel spills
- ❖ Increase groundwater recharge
- ❖ Reduce stormwater runoff and flooding
- ❖ Provide homes for butterflies, birds, amphibians and bats, which can help control mosquitoes
- ❖ Can discourage pests like Canada geese, which prefer short turf grass
- ❖ Provide opportunities for staff and community involvement and good publicity, too

See p. 4 for a "Green Landscaping" website.

## NEW RESOURCES

### Sharps Collection

The list of DNR registered sharps collection stations is now posted at [www.dnr.state.wi.us](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us). Guidance for collecting sharps is also available. On the home page, choose the "Waste Management" bureau, then "Medical Waste," then "Publications" and finally, click on the desired publication name or number.

The **Coalition for Safe Community Needle Disposal** can be reached at 713-980-3120 or by visiting [www.safeneedledisposal.org](http://www.safeneedledisposal.org).

**Preventing Blood-Borne Infections Through Pharmacy Syringe Sales and Safe Community Syringe Disposal**, a supplement to the Journal of the American Pharmaceutical Association (Nov/Dec 2002, Vol. 42, No. 6, Suppl. 2) includes two articles about Wisconsin. Read it at [www.aphanet.org/JAPhA/suppl2\\_cdc.pdf](http://www.aphanet.org/JAPhA/suppl2_cdc.pdf)

### Mercury Reduction

The Naval Dental Research Institute maintains an excellent dental web site at [www.dentalmercury.com](http://www.dentalmercury.com)



Still have staff resistant to switching away from mercury manometers? Visit [www.ciwmb.ca.gov/wpie/HealthCare/Mercury.htm](http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/wpie/HealthCare/Mercury.htm) and click on the publication **Eliminating Mercury in Hospitals**.

**Removing Mercury from Hospital Labs** is one of many fact sheets about mercury at the Sustainable Hospitals web site. Go to [www.sustainablehospitals.org/HTMLSrc/IP\\_analytical\\_mercury.html](http://www.sustainablehospitals.org/HTMLSrc/IP_analytical_mercury.html)

### Health Care Pollution Prevention

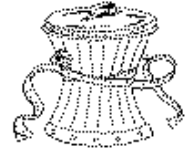
**Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E)** (for ALL medical facilities) has greatly expanded its web site this year. Visit [www.h2e-online.org](http://www.h2e-online.org) for outstanding resources and programs for reducing waste, an email forum and free monthly teleconferences for those purchasing, using or disposing of products or waste from health care.

The **Sustainable Hospitals Project** provides technical support to the healthcare industry for

selecting products and work practices that eliminate or reduce environmental and occupational hazards, maintain quality patient care and contain costs. Highly recommended, at [www.sustainablehospitals.org](http://www.sustainablehospitals.org).

### **Environmentally Preferable Purchasing.**

The US EPA has published 6 product-specific guides about the environmental impacts of purchasing decisions at [www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/](http://www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/). The guides address cleaning products, electronics, carpet, copiers, food service-ware and meetings and conferences.



New fact sheets regarding **microfiber janitorial mops; ethylene oxide and glutaraldehyde; mercury; and solid waste reduction** (by composting and by using bluewrap recycling and reusable totes) are available from the California Integrated Waste Management Board. The fact sheets contain case studies, implementation ideas, contacts, and cost and vendor information. Go to [www.ciwmb.ca.gov/wpie/HealthCare/](http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/wpie/HealthCare/)

**Cleaning for Health: Products and Practices for a Safer Indoor Environment** describes how switching to "greener" cleaners can improve indoor air quality, reduce complaints among housekeeping staff and even save you money. Order from INFORM, 120 Wall St., New York, NY 10005 or [www.informinc.org](http://www.informinc.org)

### Green Landscaping

Visit **Green Landscaping with Native Plants** at [www.epa.gov/greenacres/](http://www.epa.gov/greenacres/) Or call 800-621-8431.

### Construction & Demolition Waste

**Construction and demolition recycling** is easy to set up. To investigate green C & D projects, visit [www.h2e-online.org/tools/grnbldg.htm](http://www.h2e-online.org/tools/grnbldg.htm) and [www.pprc.org/pprc/pubs/topics/greencon/demo.html](http://www.pprc.org/pprc/pubs/topics/greencon/demo.html)

These announcements were prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, for distribution with publication PUBL-WA-809-02 (infectious waste annual report form packet) in January 2003. Comments and questions can be directed to Barb Derflinger, DNR Medical Waste Coordinator (see contact box on page 2).